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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants: P.A. Graef et al. Attorney Docket No.: WEYE116081
Application No.: 09/664,472 Group Art Unit: 3761
Filed: September 18, 2000 Examiner: J.A. Webb
Title: FLUTED COMPOSITE AND RELATED ABSORBENT ARTICLES

RESPONSE TO ADVISORY ACTION

Seattle, Washington 98101

January 3, 2003

TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

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TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS:

Claims 1-44, 46-51, 53, and 54 are pending in the application and have been examined. In response to the final rejection of claims dated October 4, 2002, the independent claims (Claims 1, 33-40, 46, and 53) were amended only for the purpose of clarity. In each of these claims the clause "wherein the regions between the bands comprise liquid distribution zones in the fibrous matrix" was amended to recite "wherein the regions between the bands comprise fibrous liquid distribution zones". Applicants believe that the amendment to the claims do not change their scope, do not raise new issues that would require the Examiner's further consideration or search, and do not raise the issue of new matter.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner states that "the limitation that the liquid distribution zones are 'fibrous', which has never been considered before and therefore cause further search and consideration". Applicants respectfully disagree.

First, as is clear from the plain language of the original claims, the liquid distribution zones are "the regions between the bands comprise liquid distribution zones in the fibrous matrix". That is, the regions of the fibrous matrix between the bands are the liquid distribution zones. The amended claims recite that "the regions between the bands comprise fibrous liquid distribution zones". Applicants submit that the original claims and the amended claims recite

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that the liquid distribution zones are the regions between the bands and are fibrous. Applicants do not see any difference between the original and amended claims and believe that the amended claims have the same scope as the original claim.

Secondly, the specification makes perfectly clear that the liquid distribution zones are the fibrous regions between the bands in the composite. At page 7, lines 30-34, the specification states:

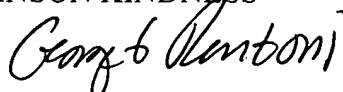
Referring to FIGURE 1, a representative fluted absorbent composite indicated generally by reference 10 formed in accordance with the present invention includes regions 12 enriched with absorbent material (i.e., liquid storage zones) and fibrous regions 14 that are substantially free of absorbent material (i.e., liquid distribution zones).

The Examiner's attention is also called to the drawings. For example, in FIGURES 1, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3, 4A, and 4B, reference numeral 14 identifies and clearly depicts the fibrous liquid distribution zones.

Applicants believe that Claims 1-44, 46-51, and 53-55 are in condition for allowance. If any issues remain that may be expeditiously addressed in a telephone interview, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' attorney at 206.695.1755.

Respectfully submitted,

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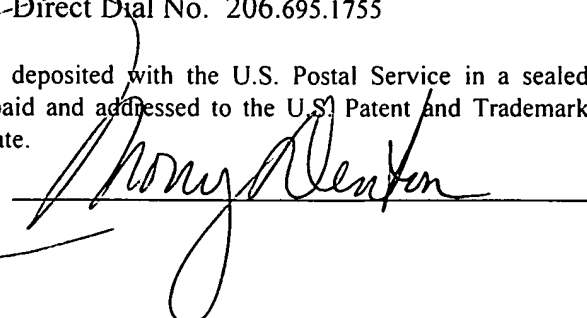
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Date: January 3, 2003

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